



NEWS RELEASE

State Senator Gary Nodler
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REFORM LEGISLATION THAT MAKES IMPROVEMENTS TO MISSOURI'S MAP TEST IS SIGNED INTO LAW

JEFFERSON CITY -- The governor today signed into law legislation sponsored by Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, which will make a variety of improvements to the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), bringing Missouri's educational standards into line with the new requirements established under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Passed in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act brought new accountability measures to schools and expanded student testing requirements.

In place since 1997, the current MAP test categorizes proficiency as above students' grade level. That standard led to about half of Missouri's schools failing to make "adequate yearly progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind law. Failing to make progress for several years can lead to penalties, including a requirement that children be allowed to transfer to other schools.

"From the very beginning this reform measure had strong bi-partisan support, with a total of 26 senators (out of a total of 34) serving as co-sponsors," said Nodler. "All of the teacher organizations, as well as superintendent and school board organizations, including the Department of Education, backed the changes made under this bill. The changes made in this legislation do not lower Missouri's standards, it simply puts them in line with the new national standards."

SB 1080 requires that by June 30, 2006, the State Board of Education align the performance standards of the MAP test so that the performance standards meet, but do not exceed, the performance standards of the National Assessment of Education Progress Exam (NAEP) exam.

Students will be tested every year, as required under the federal standards.

"This legislation will help ensure that Missouri's testing standards accurately reflect the performance of Missouri students," Senate President Pro Tem Peter Kinder, R-Cape Girardeau,

said. “Through this legislation, Sen. Nodler has helped assure that superior performance is accurately reflected in Missouri’s performance standards.”

In addition, a house committee substitute amends language onto SB 1080 that establishes new qualifications for the Board of Governors of Missouri Southern State University – Joplin. Five voting members will be selected from Missouri’s Workforce Investment Area Southwest region, which includes: Barton, Jasper, Newton, McDonald, Dade, Lawrence and Barry counties, with no more than three coming from any one county. Two voting members will be selected from any other county in the state.

Armory Bill

A Senate bill transferring ownership of the Neosho National Guard Armory to the City of Neosho was also signed into law today.

As a cost-saving measure, in October of 2003 the National Guard announced plans to close three armories – Neosho, Salem and Pierce City. Senate Bill 942 allows the State of Missouri to deed ownership of the armories to each city.

“All of these towns have big plans for these buildings,” Nodler said. “Each armory will get a new life under city ownership.”

The City of Neosho plans to use the facility as a police station and municipal courtroom. Earlier in June, the governor signed House Bill 1071, which is identical to SB 942.

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